



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## PRIMITIVE TASTE-WORDS.

By Professor ALEXANDER FRANCIS CHAMBERLAIN, Clark University.

Important for the student of comparative psychology, but as yet imperfectly investigated, are the taste-words of savage and barbarous peoples. From the field of the Algonkian languages, in which for a number of years he has made special research, the writer offers this brief contribution to the literature of the subject. The Algonkian is one of the most extensive stocks of North America, and the tribes belonging to it are typical American Indians, physically and mentally. The records we possess of their languages and dialects are of such a character as to enable us to speak with confidence concerning such sections of their vocabulary as we may desire to examine.

Among the Algonkian words of a more or less generic sort for "taste" are: Massachusetts *qutchtam*, "he tastes;" *qutchlamoonk*, "tasting, the sense of taste;" *spuhquodt*, "the taste or flavor of anything." Lenâpé *guttandamen*, "to taste;" *meschandamen*, "to taste;" *migopoquoak*, "taste." Ojibwa-Nipissing *ipogwad*, *ipogosi*, "it tastes;" *ipogosiwin*, "taste;" *nin godjîpidjige*, "I taste;" *nin tangandan*, *nin tangama*, *nin gotandan*, *nin gotama*, "I taste it, try it." Cree *kutchistawew*, "he tastes." The Cree language uses generally in lieu of a special word for "taste" the radical-suffix—*spokusiw*, *spokwan*, "taste, having a taste." The Massachusetts *qutchtam*; Ojibwa-Nipissing *godjîpidjige*, *gotama*; Cree *kutchistawew*; as Massachusetts *quichehheu*, Cree *kutchihew*, "he tries, makes a trial of," indicate, are derived from the Algonkian radical *kuł*, *got*, *godj*, *kodj*. To Cree *kuł* Lacombe (Dict., p. 424) assigns the meanings "to try, make trial of, taste," which significations attach also to the Ojibwa-Nipissing *got*, *godj*, etc. Thus "to make trial of (by tasting)" seems to be the original significance of these taste-words, a sense not far from that of some of the corresponding terms in the Aryan languages. Massachu-

setts *spuhquodt* is cognate with Cree *-spokwan*, Abnaki *-pugwat*, Ojibwa-Nipissing *ipogwad*, etc., representing an Algonkian—*pokwat*,—"having a taste, being so-tasted." Lenâpé *migopoquoak* contains the same root. From the same source also is derived Ojibwa-Nipissing *nin godjipwa* "I seek to know the taste of it,"—in French *je le déguste*. The literal sense of Ojibwa *nin tangama* is "I touch with the mouth," from the radical *tang*, "to touch," and the radical-suffix *am* "mouth." Another general taste-word is seen in Ojibwa-Nipissing *nin nisitopidjige*, "I know it by the taste," "I recognize the taste,"—the first radical is *nisit*, "knowledge."

A distinction between "good tasting" and "bad tasting" is general among the Algonkian tribes considered here: Abnaki *uripuguat*, "good tasted," *matsipuguat*, "bad tasted." Ojibwa *minopogwad*, *minopogosi*, "it has a good taste;" *mangipogwad*, *mangipogosi*, "it has a bad taste." Cree *miyospokwan*, *miyospokusiw*, "it has a good taste;" *matchipokwan*, *matchipokusiw*, "it has a bad taste." Lenâpé *wulipoquot*, "it has a fine taste," *machtschipoquot*, "it tastes ill." In all of these words the prefixes *uri*, *mino*, *miyo*, *wuli*, signify "good," and *matsi*, *mangi*, *matchi*, etc., "bad," being the ordinary terms for those ideas. The radical-prefixes *wishko*, "sweet," *wisa*, "bitter, disagreeable," *wingi*, "excellent," etc., are in like use. To the Nipissing radical *wishago* Cuoq (Lex. alg., p. 435) assigns the meanings, "disagreeable to the taste or to the smell." From it are derived *wishagopogwat*, "bad-tasting, disagreeable to the taste," and *wishagomagos*, "bad-smelling, disagreeable to the smell." From the same radical comes *wishagosi*, "he is bad-odored,"—said of a person who has eaten garlic, or one who is hairy and sweats much. In Lenâpé we find *niskandamen*, "to taste nasty," with the radical-prefix *nisk*, "nasty, dirty," and the verbal suffix-radical "to taste (with mouth)." Another interesting taste-word of a rather general sort is found in Cree *ayisipiwokisw*, "it has no taste but that of water,"—*cf.* *ayisipiy*, "clear broth, nothing but water."

Among words for "insipid," "tasteless," etc., may be cited Objibwa-Nipissing *pinisipogwad*, *pinisipogosi*; Cree *pihisipokusw*, *pihisipokwan*, "it is insipid," said particularly of victuals. Lacombe has also (Dict., p. 575) *piyekusiw*, "it is insipid,

dry, tasteless" (e. g. meat). The first words seem to signify literally "devoid of taste."

Following are some of the special taste-words in certain Algonkian tongues:

*Acid.* For "acid" Lacombe gives in *siwittin*, "it is acid," also *siwisiw*, "it is acid, sweet, salt," from the radical *siw*, "acid, sweet, salt, sour, sharp." Cuoq has in Nipissing *shiwān*, "it is acid." For "acid, tart," Rand has in Micmac *sāookw*, properly the word for "sour." The Algonkian languages here considered express "sour" and "acid" by words derived from the same root. See: *Sour*.

*Astringent.* Lenâpé *tiechtpan*, "bitter, astringent, puckery," seen in *tiechtpanihm*, "white hickory nut" and cognate, perhaps, with Menomini *titagbiu*, "bitter."

*Bitter.* Massachusetts *wesogkon*, Lenâpé *wisachgan*, Micmac *wěskūk*, Ojibwa-Nipissing *wisakan*, "it is bitter," contain the radical *wisak*. To this radical Cuoq (Lex. Alg., 1886, p. 442) assigns in Nipissing the meanings: "Amer, piquant, douloureux, en souffrance, cuisant, brûlant, à demi brûlé, vif, éclatant," and Lacombe (Dict., 1874, p. 653): "To suffer, to feel pain, bitter." Trumbull (Natick Dict., p. 186) seeks to connect Massachusetts *wesogkon*, "bitter," with *weeswe*, "gall," whence also perhaps *weesoe*, "yellow" (cf. English yellow—gall)—the cognate words for "gall" in other dialects are Cree *wisopiy*, Ojibwa-Nipissing *winsop*, Menomini *wesup*, Micmac *wiskūm*, etc. This connection is, however, not certain. The wide range of significance of the root *wisak* can be seen from the following list of derivative words: Lenâpé *wisachgissi*, "it hurts;" *wisachgank*, "rum, brandy" (so-called from its sharp, biting taste); *wisachgim*, "wild grapes;" *wisachgak* "black oak" (literally "bitter wood"). Micmac, *wiskōk* "black ash." Ojibwa-Nipissing *wisakibak*, "the leaf is bitter;" *wisagak*, "a species of ash-tree" (*frêne gras* of Canadian French); *wisagisi*, "it (bread) is bitter;" *wisagagami*, "it (liquid) is bitter;" *wisakashkate*, "he has the stomach-ache;" *wisakishtikwan*, "he has the head-ache;" *wisakakis*, "he suffers from a burn;" *wisakate*, "it is very hot in the sun;" *wisakwe*, "he has a harsh voice;" *wisakande*, "it (dress) is of a loud color." Cree *wisakimin*, "cranberry" (literally "bitter

berry"); *wisakâgamiw*, "it is a bitter liquid;" *wisakâbiw*, "he has pain in his eyes;" *wisakasew*, "his skin is sensitive (hurts);" *wisakiskâkuw*, "he has indigestion;" *wisakitchew*, "he has heart trouble." The radical *wisak* thus comprehends, in these Algonkian languages, the ideas of "bitter" in our sense of the term, "pain and suffering," the sensation of "burning," the "sharpness" of pains and feelings, the "heat" of the weather, the "harshness" of the voice, the "loudness" of a color, the "sensitivity" of the skin, etc. It includes also the "bitter" tastes of animals, plants, minerals, liquids and other substances.

Another Algonkian word for "bitter" is Cree *âkusiw*, *âkwan*, "it is bitter," from the radical *âk*, to which Lacombe (Dict., p. 288) assigns the meanings "amertume, âpreté, douleur, méchanceté." From this root are derived: *âkkohew*, "he makes him suffer great pain;" *âkwâtisiw*, "he is cruel;" *âkotonâmow*, "he has a ferocious tone of voice;" *âkwâstew*, "it is very hot;" *âkwatchiw*, "it is frozen, hardened by the cold;" *âkwâkatosuw*, "it is hardened by drying;" *âkkusiw*, "he is sick." The corresponding radical in Nipissing is *ako*, defined by Cuoq (Lex. alg., p. 33) as "mal, fort, rude, mauvais, désagréable." From this root are derived the Nipissing words: *akotagos*, "to have a harsh tone of voice;" *akomagos*, "to smell strong, to have a bad odor;" *akoshkate*, "to have the colic;" *akwagami*, "bitter, sharp, piquant liquor."

*Peppermint.* The Ojibwa word for "peppermint," *tekassing*, signifies, literally, "something, cool or cooling," from the Algonkian radical *tak(a)* "cold, cool." The *cold* "feel" of peppermint is here with the Indian the pronounced sensation, as is the case with many Europeans, especially children. The stinging, "hot" sensation seems to be subordinate. The *taste* of peppermint is submerged, apparently, in the "coolness."

*Pungent.* Several of the Algonkian dialects have borrowed their word for "pepper" from the French of North America,—Ojibwa-Nipissing *dipweban* or *tipweban* is a corruption or remodeling of *du poivre* (in Canadian French *du pèuvre*). Ojibwa has, however, also the term (*ga*)*wisakang*, Mississaga and Nipissing the simpler *wisakan*, literally "it is bitter, sharp," from the radical *wisak* discussed under *Bitter*. Micmac *dâpesawââl*,

"pepper" seems likewise to be of foreign origin and not a native word made to occasion. The Cree language, in which "pepper" has been named from the form of the "corns," uses for "to season with pepper" *siwnew*, a derivative of the radical *siw*, "acid, sour, sharp." Ojibwa has escaped naming "mustard" from its taste by calling it *wesâwag degwandaming*, "the yellow thing that is eaten with other things." Micmac has *lamütald*, borrowed from French *la moutarde*.

*Rancid.* Ojibwa-Nipissing *satepogwad*, *satepogosi*; Cree *sâstesiw*, *sâstesin*, "it tastes rancid," contain the Algonkian radical *sate*, *sâste*, which Cuoq defines in Nipissing as signifying "rancid," and Lacombe in Cree as "rancid, bad-tasting, partly spoiled, bitter, insipid." It is worth noting that in Nipissing *satewe*, from the same root, means "he has a hoarse voice."

*Salt.* Many (perhaps most) of the Algonkian tribes were unacquainted with salt until after their contact with the white man. Concerning Eliot's famous translation of the Bible into the language of the Massachusetts Indians Trumbull says (Natick Dict., 1903, p. 317): "The English word is transferred by Eliot, the Indians not having then learned the use of salt. In a single instance, 'salt water' (James, 3, 12) is rendered *seippog*, *i. e.* 'sour water'." The Micmac term for "salt" is *salawa* (from French *sel*), upon which word Rand thus comments (Micmac Dict., 1888, p. 224): "Here is evidence that the Indians used no salt before they obtained it from the whites, since they had no name for the article." The Menomini, according to Hoffman (14th Ann. Rep. Bur. Ethnol., p. 286): do not use salt: "Salt is not used by the Menomini during meals, neither does it appear to have a place in their kitchen for cooking or baking. Maple sirup is used instead, and it is singular how one may acquire the taste for this substitute for salt, even on meats." Among Algonkian words for "salt" are: Ojibwa-Nipissing *shiwitagan*, Cree *siwittâgan*, Menomini *shéweqtaken*, derived from the root *shiw*, *siw*, "acid, sour," further discussed under *Sour*. Hoffman says that the Menomini word for "salt" signifies "sour and sweet,"—evidence of the mixed character of the Indian's reaction to the taste-stimulation of salt. The Blackfoot term for "salt," *istsexipoko*, is derived from *istsipoko*, "bitter." As Lenâpé words for "salt"

are given (Brinton and Anthony, Dict., 1889, p. 132, p. 131), *sikey* and *schewunk*,—also *schuon*, “saltish, sour;” *schewwak*, “salt meat;” *sikeyhasu*, “salted, pickled.” The second of these Lenâpé words is evidently from the Algonkian radical *shiw*. The first, *sikey* is probably from the radical *siki*, *shiki*, “urine,” with reference to the taste. *Schuon* is identical with Ojibwa *shiwān*, “it is sour.”

Some of the southeastern Algonkian peoples, of Virginia and the region westward, where “salt licks” occur, knew salt, which formed one of the articles of their primitive commerce, as Mr. W. W. Tooker has shown. (The town-name *Mahoning*, from Lenâpé *mahonink*, “at the ‘deer-lick’ ” preserves one of the Algonkian terms for these places). The Chaouanons were so called because they were “salt-makers” (Amer. Antiq., Jan., 1895). As the names for “salt” employed by the Virginian Algonkian people prove they also called it after the “sour” taste, as did the northern tribes cited above.

*Sour*. A widespread Algonkian radical for “sour, acid” is *siw*, *shiw*, seen in Massachusetts *sêê*, Ojibwa-Nipissing *shiwān*, Cree *siwaw*, Lenâpé *sh'won*, etc., “it is sour.” From this radical have been formed the following words: Massachusetts *sêe petukqunnunk*, “unleavened bread;” *sêog*, “what is sour;” *nukkone sêog*, “leaven;” *sêane*, “sour (unripe fruit)” and “sour” (of drink); *sêippog*, “salt water” (literally “sour water”) Ojibwa-Nipissing *shiwabik*, “alum” (literally “sour stone”); *shiwibak*, “sorrel” (literally “sour leaf”); *shiwitagan*, “salt” (literally “sour thing”); *shiwitiganabo*, “brine, pickle” (literally “salt liquid”); *shiwagamisigan*, “sirup” (literally “sour or sweet (?) sugar drink”); *shiwān*, “acid, tart” (of berries); *shiwagamisin*, “it (milk) is sour;” *shiwab*, “his eyes cannot bear the light;” *shiwās*, “he is dazzled” (*i. e.* by the “sharpness” of the light); *shiwabo*, “vinegar” (literally “sour liquid”). Cree *siwattāgan*, “salt;” *siwattāganābuiy*, “brine, pickle;” *siwābuiy*, “vinegar;” *siwāpak*, “rhubarb” (literally “sour leaf”); *siwatew*, “he feels sour at the stomach” (from emptiness); *siwisiw*, “it is acid, sweet, salt;” *siwāgamiw*, “the liquid is sweet, salt, etc.,” *siwittin*, “it is acid;” *siwāsuw*, “the sun hurts his eyes.” To the Nipissing radical *shiw* Cuoq (Lex. alg., p. 92) assigns the meanings “acide, aigre, âpre,

sûr, salé," and Lacombe (Dict., p. 599) for the Cree *siw* gives "acide, sucré, salé, aigre." The Algonkian radical *siw*, *shiw* thus includes the senses of "sour" (as in minerals, plants, fruits, liquids, etc.), "acid," "salt," "sweet (sugared)," "effect of light on the eyes," (by reason of its "sharpness"), "sourness at stomach," etc. The comprehension of "sour," "acid," "salt" and "sweet" under one root is noteworthy. In Menomini, another Algonkian dialect the words for "sweet," *shéwan*; "sour," *shéwegnen*; "salt," *shéweqtâken*; and "sirup," *shéwakamitâ*, all contain the same root *shew*, *shiw*, *siw*. The designation of "sirup," Ojibwa-Nipissing *shiwagamisigan*, (literally "sour or sweet (?) sugar drink") by the radical denoting also "acid" and "salt" is interesting in connection with what Dr. Hoffman has said about the use of maple sirup with meat, etc., by the Menomini as a substitute for salt.

*Sweet.* One Algonkian radical for "sweet" is seen in Massachusetts *weekon*, "it is sweet;" Lenâpé *wingan*, "sweet, savory, good-tasted;" Micmac *wikw*, "sweet;" Cree *wikkasin*, *wikitisiw*, "it is sweet to the taste;" Ojibwa *wingipogwad*, *wingipogosi*, "it has an excellent taste." To the radical *wikk* in Cree Lacombe (Dict., p. 649) assigns the meanings "agréable au goût, à l'odorat, aimable," and for Nipissing *wing* Cuoq (Lex. alg., p. 440) gives "agréable, doux, bon, très-bon, excellent." From the Algonkian radical *wik*, *wing* have been formed among others the following words: Massachusetts *weekontamunk*, "pleasure, gladness, joy, delight;" *weekontamunat*, "to be glad, to rejoice;" *wekontam*, "he is glad;" *weekontamwal*, "glad, joyful, merry." Lenâpé *wingandamen*, "it tastes good;" *wingapue*, "good, sweet broth;" *wingel*, "eat-able;" *wingi*, "fain, willingly, gladly;" *wingimachtek*, "odoriferous;" *wingimacquot*, "it has a good, pleasant smell;" *winginamen*, "to delight in, to be pleased with." Ojibwa-Nipissing *wingashk*, "aromatic plant;" *wingagami*, "it is an excellent, good-tasting liquid;" *wingawis*, "it (animal) is gentle." Cree *wikask*, "aromatic plant;" *wikkihew*, "he likes it;" *wikkimamew*, "he finds it agreeable to the smell;" *wikkimâkahun*, "perfume, aromatic substance;" *wikkimâsum*, "it is odoriferous;" *wikkimâsewew*, "he burns incense." The Algonkian radical *win*, "to have an odor, a smell," seen in Lenâpé *winak*,



“sassafrass,” belongs here also perhaps. The Algonkian radical *wig*, *wing* has evidently comprehended a variety of significations, “good,” “pleasant,” (particularly to the senses of taste and smell), “aromatic,” “odoriferous,” “sweet,” etc. The same confusion of “taste” and “smell” is found in the Aryan languages. The primitive meaning seems to have been “agreeable or pleasant” (to taste, smell).

Another term for “sweet” is found in Ojibwa-Nipissing *wishkobad*, *wishkobise*, “it is sweet;” and the derivatives *wishkobimin*, “sweet corn;” *wishkobagami*, “the liquid is sweet,” etc. To the radical *wishkob* Cuoq (*Lex. alg.*, p. 434) assigns the meaning of “succulent.”

This brief study contains the chief facts concerning the taste-words of several Algonkian peoples, and brings out the primitive confusions and associations of the various senses naturally to be expected at the stages of culture considered. The reactions of the American aborigines to the stimuli offered them by the intruding Aryans, as expressed in the new terms of their vocabulary and the new twists given old words form the results of an unconscious psycho-physical experiment on a grand scale, which cannot fail to be of supreme interest to all students of mankind.